Travel Management Rule Implementation Rocky Mountain Region

FOREST ACTION PLAN

Medicine Bow and Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland



FY 2006 - 2009

Rocky Mountain Region USDA Forest Service

April 27, 2006 Revised April 2, 2007

Travel Management Rule Implementation ACTION PLAN

Grassland Manageme designated	ine Bow and Routt National Fores have prepared this action plan for ent Rule. We plan to have every ac by the close of fiscal year 2007, th cal year 2008, and the Thunder Ba	the implementa cre of the Routt N e Medicine Bow	tion of the 2005 Travel National Forest National Forest by the
I approve the stated time	nis revised action plan and will strive line(s).	e to implement the	e strategy according to the
Signed	/s/ Mary Peterson Forest Supervisor	Date	April 4, 2007
	<u>e</u>		

Revised Action Plan prepared by:

Ann Marie Verde

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Introduction

This action plan is meant to be reviewed and adjusted as necessary to reflect emerging needs, shifting priorities, or changes in available funding. This Forest Action Plan addresses two processes: planning and on-the-ground implementation. This Action plan is designed to serve as a tool for implementation of the 2005 Travel Management rule on the Medicine Bow and Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland, and is prepared for use in:

- Project scheduling in a forest-wide, strategic manner in line with forest priorities.
- Allocating forest-wide resources for travel management.
- Establishing an implementation team with specific responsibilities.
- Coordination with other National Forests
- Monitoring and evaluation progress of planned activities.

Revisions dated April 2007 are shown in blue.

Travel Management Approach

Routt National Forest – Designation date: September 2007

Travel decisions starting in the late 1980s and direction in the 1998 Forest Plan restricted motorized use on the Routt National Forest to designated routes. We plan to implement the Rule without further analysis. We also recognize from our publics and our recreation "niche" exercise that OHV use is an important part of our recreation program.

Once the Travel Management Rule is implemented, we will begin to work with the public to redesign our system of OHV routes to concentrate them into more appropriate areas, expand the diversity of opportunities and to provide a high quality system of OHV routes through small scale travel management decisions. Our forest presently allows for parking and camping 300 feet away from roads. We plan to allow travel 300' from designated roads for the purposes of dispersed camping and game retrieval only, in accordance with the Rule.

Winter conflicts between snowmobiles and non-motorized users are also of concern to us. We see the need to identify the system of winter trails and areas open to motorized use.

Medicine Bow National Forest – Designation date: September 2008

The forest is currently in the sixth+ year of a seven year process, started with the Travel Management decision of October 2000. The site-specific analyses required by this decision should be completed by September 2007. Each district is at a different stage in the analysis and designation process, but all are on schedule to implement the Rule by 2008. These decisions designate the roads and trails open to motorized use, identify new motorized trail opportunities, and prohibit all motorized use off of the designated system. The public was involved at all levels of these designations. The intent is to implement the rule based on these decisions without further analysis.

Our approach will be to inform the public and share with them our conclusions and work toward implementing the Rule without further NEPA. After the Rule is implemented we plan to refine our system of designated routes over time through small scale travel management decisions. We see the real work of implementing the Rule to be on-the-ground actions and not in further planning efforts at this time. The majority of the Medicine Bow NF presently allows for motorized travel 300 feet away from roads for camping, picnicking, parking, game retrieval, and firewood gathering. On the Pole Mountain unit, motorized travel is allowed 100 feet from designated roads for the purpose of parking. We plan to continue this practice in accordance with the Rule, for dispersed camping and game retrieval only.

Winter conflicts between snowmobiles and non-motorized users are also of concern to us. We see the need to identify the system of winter trails and areas open to motorized use.

Thunder Basin National Grassland - Designation date: September 2009

Previous to the 2002 National Grassland Plan, the Thunder Basin was open to off-road travel. The 2002 Plan restricted motorized travel to existing routes, while calling for analysis and designation of motorized routes. The Grassland will begin this analysis in 2007 and have the designation completed in 2009. The travel analysis and environmental assessment processes will involve the public at all stages. Education, information and enforcement will be key factors in implementing a successful travel management strategy on the Grassland.

Organizational Capacity

The 2005 Travel Management Rule implementation responsibilities go beyond what most travel management program managers are generally assigned to do. With current organizations, some units may be unable to respond with effective programs. There will be impacts to programs on all units.

Unit	Staffing	Responsibilities
EXISTING		
SO	Ann Marie Verde	Travel Management Rule Implementation
		Coordination, Forest Coordination with RO,
		Forest Training Cadre, Engineering
SO	Ray George	Forest Training Cadre, Recreation
SO	Tony Smith	Forest Training Cadre, Planning and GIS
SO	Diann Ritschard	Public Affairs Specialist
Routt NF	Ric Ondrejka	Yampa District Program Lead
Med Bow NF	John Baumchen	Brush Creek-Hayden District Program Lead
Routt NF	Kent Foster	Hahn's Peak-Bears Ears District Program Lead
Routt NF	Clayton Cornwell	Parks District Program Lead
Med Bow NF	Steve Williams	Laramie District Program Lead
Med Bow NF	Marilee Houtler	Douglas District Program Lead
& Thunder		
Basin NG		
FUTURE	As assigned	GIS/Infra support for map development
	As assigned	Engineering support for mixed use studies and
		database support.
	As assigned	Verify existing right-of-ways
	As assigned	Law Enforcement and Education
	As assigned	Sign installation and maintenance

Forest Training

The forest provided training for the Forest and Districts Staffs on **February 15-16, 2006** at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Laramie, WY. The District Travel Management Coordinators received training on the Rule and participated in developing the Action Plan to implement the Rule. The Forest Leadership Team received a briefing on **February 28, 2006** on the existing Travel Management status of the Forests and Grassland, and steps needed to implement the Rule.

Most of the District Coordinators or Recreation Staff and SO Specialists have taken the Infra training for Access and Travel Management. Additional training may be needed during map development.

The Planning Process:

This process follows the National direction as documented in the *Motor Vehicle Route and Area Designation Guide*, by the National OHV Implementation Team. This schedule was developed February 15-16, 2006 at the Medicine Bow and Routt NFs and Thunder Basin NG Travel Management Training. Each step is a milestone to help monitor implementation. Adjustments will be made as funding and priorities change. The implementation schedule will be closely monitored to assure that the forest will meet its Rule implementation target. The projected date for designation is the date of the motorized vehicle use map publication (step 5).

Travel management planning will be adaptive and on-going. Some level of travel planning is incorporated in most resource analyses such as timber sales, fuels projects, oil and gas development, allotment plans and watershed analysis. Some planning will be occurring concurrent with the designation process, and additional travel planning will continue after the initial designation of routes. As needs arise and funding allows, additional analysis will be used to address changed conditions.

Fiscal Year	Step 1: Compile existing travel management direction and begin public involvement	Step 2: Assemble resource and social data for consideration	Step 3: Use Travel Analysis to Identify Proposal for Change	Step 4: Environmental Analysis and Decision Making	Step 5: Publish Motor Vehicle Use Map	Step 6: Implement Monitor, and Revise
06	September 2006 - completed					On-going
07		January 2007- completed	N/A	N/A	September 2007	On-going
08			As needed and when funding is available	As needed and when funding is available		On-going
09			As needed and when funding is available	As needed and when funding is available	Revise January 2009	On-going

Fiscal Year	Step 1: Compile existing travel management direction and begin public involvement	Step 2: Assemble resource and social data for consideration	Step 3: Use Travel Analysis to Identify Proposal for Change	Step 4: Environmental Analysis and Decision Making	Step 5: Publish Motor Vehicle Use Map	Step 6: Implement Monitor, and Revise
06	September 2006 - completed		Travel Management RAP completed 2004	White Rock and Soldier Summit September 2007		On-going
07		December 2007		Bow River and NE Sierra Madre September 2008		On-going
08			As needed and when funding is available	As needed and when funding is available	September 2008	On-going
09			As needed and when funding is available	As needed and when funding is available	Revise January 2010	On-going

Fiscal Year	Step 1: Compile existing travel management direction and begin public involvement	Step 2: Assemble resource and social data for consideration	Step 3: Use Travel Analysis to Identify Proposal for Change	Step 4: Environmental Analysis and Decision Making	Step 5: Publish Motor Vehicle Use Map	Step 6: Implement Monitor, and Revise
06			Travel Management RAP completed February 2006	Snowy Range September 2007		On-going
07	January 2007 - completed	April 2007 - completed				On-going
08			As needed and when funding is available	As needed and when funding is available	September 2008	On-going
09			As needed and when funding is available	As needed and when funding is available	Revise January 2010	On-going

UNIT	UNIT: Medicine Bow National Forest - Douglas Ranger District - Laramie Peak Unit								
Fiscal Year	Step 1: Compile existing travel management direction and begin public involvement	Step 2: Assemble resource and social data for consideration	Step 3: Use Travel Analysis to Identify Proposal for Change	Step 4: Environmental Analysis and Decision Making	Step 5: Publish Motor Vehicle Use Map	Step 6: Implement Monitor, and Revise			
06	September 2006 - completed	September 2006 - completed	Laramie Peak February 2006	Laramie Peak October 2006		On-going			
07						On-going			
08			As needed and when funding is available	As needed and when funding is available	September 2008	On-going			
09			As needed and when funding is available	As needed and when funding is available	Revise January 2010	On-going			

UNIT: Thunder Basin National Grassland – Douglas Ranger District								
Fiscal Year	Step 1: Compile existing travel management direction and begin public involvement	Step 2: Assemble resource and social data for consideration	Step 3: Use Travel Analysis to Identify Proposal for Change	Step 4: Environmental Analysis and Decision Making	Step 5: Publish Motor Vehicle Use Map	Step 6: Implement Monitor, and Revise		
06						On-going		
07	September 2007	September 2007				On-going		
08			March 2008			On-going		
09				March 2009	September 2009	On-going		

On-The-Ground Implementation

Management of the motorized recreation occurring on our national forests and grasslands follows the basic "3Es" - Education and information, Enforcement and Engineering. Without on-the-ground actions, the designation alone will not solve the travel management challenge. These steps are outlined below.

Education and Information

District education and information programs will be developed in conjunction with map publication. Strategies and actions will vary by district. Education and Information strategies will be developed with the Communications Plans.

Engineering

Engineering includes all the physical or infrastructure improvements that need to take place to facilitate the implementation of the Rule. These physical actions require close coordination with engineering's management of forest roads. Some actions items, such as signing, may require the development of a signing plan.

The Forest has been active in decommissioning unneeded routes across all units. Decommissioning accomplishments range from 10 to 32 miles per year. This rate of accomplishment is expected to continue.

The Routt National Forest has made significant progress over the past few years in meeting consistent signing standards developed with the Colorado Natural Resource Group (CNRG). As signing needs adapt to meet the Rule, all units will need to update and implement a consistent signing strategy.

The Wyoming Recreation Action Team (REACT) is reviewing signing conventions for all public lands across the state, with a goal to have consistent use of signs as well as the permit sticker program.

Engineering improvements will be developed in conjunction with travel management plans on each district. Strategies and actions will vary by district.

A strategy for conducting engineering studies for mixed-use will be developed within the next year.

Enforcement

Enforcement will be a critical component to successful implementation of the proposed Rule. Forest Service presence in high-use areas is essential to educating the OHV user community regarding current policy and regulation as well as acceptable and ethical practice. With education and engineering efforts in place, enforcement personnel are provided the tools to take action against violators of regulations. Close coordination with district education and information plans is a key component of the enforcement strategy.

Posting will be accomplished by placing a copy of the use map in the offices of the Forest Supervisor and Districts. Postings will be monitored and replaced/repaired as necessary. Posting of the map will also take

place on the forest web sites. On-the-ground route marker signing will be essential to enforcement. There will be a transition period where existing closure and travel management direction is posted on-the-ground until users are accustomed to the new Rule and use of the Motor Vehicle Use Map.

As Motor Vehicle Use Maps are published, existing Forest Orders will be rescinded. Temporary orders will still be utilized for emergency closures for resource protection and public safety, and will be posted.

Emphasis will be placed on education. It is important to develop informed consent, support and understanding among employees, recreation users, state and county governments and other interested publics. Local units will work with local Law Enforcement Officers to coordinate and schedule patrolling efforts. District employees and Law Enforcement Officers plan to patrol areas of concern on weekends, holidays and during special events, as funding permits. Verbal or written warnings will be issued to violators during the initial implementation phase of the Rule. Officer discretion based on circumstances dictate the course of action. The action taken will vary from a written or verbal warning to a Violation Notice to impoundment of vehicles. Saturation patrols may be planned for key problem areas periodically through the year.

District law enforcement programs will be developed in conjunction with map publication. Strategies and actions will vary by district.

Partnerships

Each of these "3Es" Education and Information, Enforcement and Engineering have opportunities for partnership. All Districts on the Medicine Bow-Routt and Thunder Basin are active in pursuing partnerships. A few examples are listed below.

Identify key partners and the kind or opportunities the forest is interested in

Activities:	Inventory teams to assist in locating routes and areas	Trail construction and maintenance	Post signs	User education contacts	Other
Colorado Natural Resources Group (CNRG)			Monetary contributions to install consistent signing on the Routt NF		
Colorado State Trails Program		Motorized trail maintenance			
Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources (trails)	Monetary contribution to analysis and design of motorized trail system.	Monetary contribution for construction and maintenance of motorized trail system.	Monetary contribution for signing of motorized trail system.	Development of maps and brochures for motorized use.	Monetary support for enforcement of existing OHV regulations
WYDOT, TEAL grants		Non-motorized trail construction.			
Wyoming Recreation Action Team (REACT) County Sheriffs'				Develop strategy for user education	Wyoming strategy for motorized use opportunities. Cooperative agreements for
Departments					law enforcement.

Communication

Communication occurs throughout the planning and designation process. The Rule encourages collaborative efforts and the communication strategy should encourage this. The Forest communication strategy tiers from the Regional communication strategy (see appendix B, of Regional Implementation Strategy). Consistency is an important goal between forests especially at the state level and the communication plan that is developed will be coordinated with the other forests in Wyoming and Colorado as well as sister agencies and local governments.

Each Forest and District has different user groups and messages. Individual communications strategies will be developed as needed.

Goal One:

Provide accurate and timely information to key audiences about the Rule and implementation processes.

Objectives:

- a. Establish communication networks to ensure audiences have ample access to information about the Rule, its implementation and opportunities for involvement.
- b. Develop communication products that may be disseminated through the communication networks, media, local/state governments and others to keep the public informed as implementation proceeds and the Forests work for full compliance by 2009.

Goal Two:

Promote compliance with travel management regulations, foster partnerships and seek collaboration opportunities to maintain the quality of designated routes.

Objectives:

- a. Encourage motorized users and user groups to continue to take personal responsibility for their activities on public lands, which include the shared responsibility to ensure routes remain sustainable.
- b. Engage motorized users, interest groups, state and local governments, etc., with activities to ensure routes are maintained and continue to offer quality recreational experiences.
- c. Encourage resource protection interest groups to support activities that will restore damaged landscapes and help ensure responsible motorized use. (ie: road decommissioning, signing and information, stream restoration)

Key Messages

The Regional Communication Strategy features general key messages as part of its package. These are good resources for the forest to use. The development of key messages may need to be updated throughout the planning and designation process.

Please refer to the updated Communication Plan on our fsweb site: http://fsweb/Travel_management/travel_management.shtml

Audiences

This table provides direction for the audiences that need to be communicated to and the proposed method for that communication. Specific methods will be developed in conjunction with publication of the Motor Vehicle Use Map for the Medicine Bow and Routt National Forests. The Thunder Basin National Grassland will develop a separate plan when beginning analysis in 2007.

Please refer to the updated Communication Plan on our fsweb site: http://fsweb/Travel_management/travel_management.shtml

Internal	Method	Date
Line officers and field personnel		
Law enforcement personnel		
Regional Travel Management Coordinator		
and ID team		
VIS, public affairs and front liners		
External		
Congressional Representatives		
Key Stakeholders: OHV users,		
environmental groups, game and fish		
organizations and other visitor groups		
State and local governments		
Travel industry (manufacturers and		
retailers)		

Interest Groups

The following is a list of interest groups that we have identified that we will make a special effort to include in our collaborative efforts.

The contact list of interested parties is constantly updated. Please refer to the updated Communication Plan on our fsweb site: http://fsweb/Travel_management/travel_management.shtml for an updated list of contacts.

Communications with various interest groups will rely heavily on maintaining up-to-date links to established web sites of each group.

Communication Products

The regional communication team will provide a menu of communication tools that should be modified for specific needs and audiences.

Communication tools will also be created at the local level that are tailored to audiences and need. Every effort should be made to be consistent with neighboring forests, sister agencies and state and local governments. A Regional web site designed as a portal to national, regional and local information. A link to all forest-level travel management information will be featured on this site.

Tool	Intended Audience	Target Date	Developed By
Forest web site linked to the regional web site.	Interested public; special interest groups; federal, state and local governments; sister agencies and internal audiences		
PowerPoint presentation based on regional model to be modified for forest purposes.	External audience, public meetings, legislative briefings, interest group meetings, etc.		
Fact Sheet Template modified by Forest with forest-level action plan information	External audiences		
Briefing Paper Template modified by Forest will include forest-level action plan information	Internal mgmt. briefings and external briefings with legislators, county commissioners and others		RO CLA Modified by Forest PAO
Other communication tools developed by the forest for specific needs and audiences	Internal and external		Developed as needed.
Provide link from interested groups' web sites to current travel management information and plans.	External audiences		

Funding Strategy

During our Forest Training and Action Plan development in February 2006, a preliminary workload analysis came up with \$400,000 per year of funding needed for the next three years to implement the Rule. For the last several years, Roads has funded Travel Analyses for \$100,000 per year, and will continue to fund analysis for the Grassland in 2007 and 2008 as previously agreed by the FLT. Recreation and Trails will have a substantial contribution over the next few years in developing maps and signing needs to meet the Rule. Additional support from other resource areas such as Wildlife, Vegetation, Lands, Soils and Water, Fire, Timber and Minerals will be needed to fully implement the Rule.

The following table identifies the BLI(s) share using Primary Purpose for the proposed actions/purpose and need, and the estimated costs.

	Fiscal Year: 2006		Fiscal Year 2007	Fiscal Year: 2007		Fiscal Year: 2008		Fiscal Year: 2009	
	BLI(s) for activities*	Amount** (\$1,000s)							
1.	CMRD	\$100.0	CMRD	\$100.0	CMRD	\$100.0	CMRD	\$100.0	
2.			NFRW/	\$160.0	NFRW/	\$160.0	NFRW/	\$160.0	
			CMTL		CMTL		CMTL		
3.			Other	\$140.0	Other	\$140.0	Other	\$140.0	
4.									
5.									
Grants:									
Totals:		\$100.0		\$400.0		\$400.0		\$400.0	

^{*}Up to 5 BLIs for each unit, **not less than 20% of total.

Documentation of the rationale used for funding:

During our Forest Training and Action Plan development in February 2006, a preliminary workload analysis determined \$400,000 per year of funding is needed to implement the Rule over the next three years. (For details of the workload analysis, see "Worksheet for Implementation" on the Forest internal website: http://fsweb/wwwnewmedbow/Travel management/travel management.shtml)

- 1. Assume 65% will come from NFRW/CMRD/CMTL = \$260,000 per year (approx \$43,000 per district).
- 2. Other BLI contributions would come up with \$140,000 per year.

Reprioritized program of work

Based on the above expenditures dedicated for travel management, other targets may not be accomplished. This documented reprioritization will be a starting point for discussion with the Regional Forester and budget team.

<u>CMRD</u> - because the Forest has allocated approximately \$100,000 CMRD to travel management for the last 6 years, the effect of this allocation will not be noticed but represents an opportunity forgone. At the current road maintenance cost, \$100,000 is approximately 200 miles of level 3-5 road maintenance. Because of the continuing decline in CMRD we are already migrating roads from level 3-5 maintenance to level 1-2 maintenance.

CMTL - on the ground maintenance of the trail system will be less, in the neighborhood of 50%.

FY	BLI(s)	Assigned	Anticipated	Narrative	
	Activity	Target	accomplishment		
06-	TL-SYS-STD	Annual 1,555	Annual 780	We will be accumulating deferred	
09				maintenance	
06-	TL-MAINT-	Annual 917	Annual 450	Emphasis will be moved from on the	
09	STD			ground maintenance to database	
				maintenance necessary for TM Rule	
				compliance	

<u>NFIM</u> - effects are multiple and compounded by other program requirements. Work on data preparation for full implementation of Spatial Data Engine (SDE) will be limited or delayed because of Travel Management GIS work (mostly in late FY06 and early FY07). Regular route GIS editing and cleanup will be affected by TM work (more road and trail editing needing to be done in a shorter amount of time). Planned and unplanned walk-in support for GIS products and analysis will be reduced in FY06, FY07 and FY08. Support to I-Web could be reduced in FY07.

FY	BLI(s)	Assigned	Anticipated	Narrative
	Activity	Target	accomplishment	
07-	LGCY-DAT-	Unknown	Unknown	Anticipated 50% reduction in assigned
09	2B-MIG-NUM			target.
07-	LGCY-DAT-	Unknown	Unknown	Anticipated 50% reduction in assigned
09	MIG-EC			target.
07-	LGCY-DAT-	Unknown	Unknown	Anticipated 50% reduction in assigned
09	MIG-NUM			target.
07-	LDSCP-	Annually 3	Annually 1	District and SO GIS staff will be working
09	ECSYS-	-	-	on Travel Management GIS tasks.
	ASSES-			
	CMPLT			

<u>NFRW</u> - effects are multiple and compounded by other program requirements. Recreation Site Facility Master Plan implementation will be delayed because funding is diverted to Travel Management. Some facilities will not be managed to standard and may be closed temporarily. Field presence, enforcement, and wilderness presence will be negatively impacted. The Recreation Program also has to renew Summer Home permits in the next two years.

FY	BLI(s)	Assigned	Anticipated	Narrative
	Activity	Target	accomplishment	
07-	REC-PAOT-	Annually	Annually	Work will be shifted from DREC to GFA
09	DAYS-ADM-	951,110	845,000	
	STD			
07-	REC-ED-	Annually 90	Annually 80	Work will be shifted from INT to GFA
09	PROD-STD		-	

NFMG - primarily affects the Douglas district.

FY	BLI(s) Activity	Assigned Target	Anticipated accomplishment	Narrative
08 -	OIL-GAS-	522	390	Presumes processing of new applications
09	GEO-OP-ADM			continues at the current rate/target

<u>NFLM</u> - increased work on ROW will impact the program to an unknown degree. In '07 and '08 the affect of the Travel Management Rule will be compounded by the emphasis on Ditch Bill.

NFTM

vitv	Target	accomplishment	
BR-VOL-	Annually 50,000 ccf		Reduction in seasonal help and tree marking paint

NFVW

FY	BLI(s) Activity	Assigned Target	Anticipated accomplishment	Narrative
06- 09	RG-RSTR- PROT-NEPA	Annually 61,000	Annually 55,000	Reduction in seasonal help about a 10% reduction in monitoring target and about 25% reduction in monitoring range on the TBNG

<u>NFWF and Others</u> – There will be impacts to many other resource programs as personnel devoted to Travel Management are not available for other program work. A reduction in target accomplishment in these programs can be expected as well (NFTM, NFWF, NFVW, and WFHF).

Requested Additional Regional Office Support

The Forest requests from the regional office Travel Management Rule Implementation Team both the core team and the extended team additional support in the following areas below.

Additio	Additional Regional Office Support Request					
Item	Additional support requested	Desired delivery date				
1.	Direction and training for motorized mixed-use engineering studies.	May 2007				
2.	Support in development of Motor Vehicle Use Maps.	On-going				
3.	Coordination and direction on dispersed camping and game retrieval policy	March 2007 - completed				
4	Coordination on consistent signing policy and direction	On-going				
5.						
6.						
7.						